

HOUSEKEEPING — 1898!

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year from 1936-1939 and personal taxes of 50 cents per year from 1930-1934. On Dec. 19, 1941, Vaughn's claim to title was finalized.

Vaughn's acquisition of the property did not end its transfers. The property continued to change hands during the ensuing years and came into this writer's possession in 1952.

As each abstract was made and a new series of transactions begun, it seems that the needs to be satisfied by the buyer and/or seller increased with the years. The final abstract description requires three long paragraphs of very finely typed print to explain all the factors which must be satisfied to make the purchase legal. Divorce judgments, support for the insane, tax delinquencies, etc., are all included. Each transfer makes the succeeding transfers more complicated.

HOUSEKEEPING — 1898!

by Mrs. E. N. Baty
Des Moines, Iowa

Mrs. Baty has lived at 1325 Norton Ave. in Des Moines, Iowa, since her husband built the house in 1900. The following sketch is her candid account of "setting up housekeeping in 1898!"

I quit high school in September, 1898, as I had consented to marry my "feller" on Dec. 10, 1898. No one gave us any "loot" parties so we were on our own! My husband-to-be was a carpenter, working nine hours a day, six days a week at 75 cents per day.

We were able to buy a mattress and set of springs, a dresser, three chairs and two rockers all for \$21 cash! A set of six *Rodgers* silver-plated knives, forks and spoons cost \$7.50. Three tablespoons were 30 cents. Six plates and six cups and saucers were \$1.

I bought yard wide muslin to make sheets and pillow cases. It took five yards of muslin per sheet, the seam running down the middle of each sheet. I bought 15 yards of muslin at

six yards for \$1 to make three sheets. My mother gave us bed pillows for which I made three pairs of cases. It took 20 yards of outing flannel and six pounds of cotton batting to make two comforts. I paid 75 cents for the yarn to tie them. Fortunately, Mother helped me to make the things! Real linen table cloth was four yards for \$1 and real linen crash was 10 cents a yard for hand towels.

The following items and prices are a list of the other expenses I recorded in an account book when we made our initial purchases:

small lamp, complete	\$.15	rolling pin	.10
large lamp, complete	.50	potato masher	.10
alarm clock	1.25	paring knife	.05
10 foot rug	8.00	2 lids	.10
5 yds. curtain material	1.00	chopping bowl & knife	.20
3 curtain shades	.45	2 small bowls	.20
3 curtain rods	.30	2 cereal bowls	.10
5 spools of thread	.25	salt & pepper shakers	.10
a packet of needles	.05	spoon holder	.10
a paper of pins	.05	sugar & creamer	.20
sissores	.25	butter dish	.20
6 linen napkins	.50	2 pie tins	.10
wire toaster	.20	water pail	.10
coffee pot	.35	scrub pail	.10
roaster	.20	coal pail	.25
meat platter	.25	dust pan & broom	.20
stew pan	.25	oil can for kerosene	.25
frying pan	.10	chamber set	1.00
dish pan	.45	comb	.25

On our first trip to the grocery store, I recorded the purchase of these supplies:

5 lbs. of sugar	\$.25	beef steak	\$.20
5 lbs. of flour	.25	soup bone	.05
1 lb. of coffee	.25	bottle of mustard	.05
1 lb. of butter	.25	crackers (bulk)	.10
1 lb. of cheese	.20	3 lb. sack of oat meal	.10
10 lbs. of potatoes	.35	3 lb. sack of corn meal	.10
3 lbs. of beans	.25	raisins	.10
3 lbs. of lard	.25	matches	.05
1 doz. eggs	.12	gasoline for stove	.30
1 lb. of bacon	.20	kerosene for lamps	.10
1 lb. of sausage	.10	miscellaneous	4.95
meat	.50		

We paid cash for everything! In February, 1899, my husband was promoted to foreman, still working nine hours a day, six days a week, but for \$2 a day.

Our grocery bills ran about the same until the gardeners started their vegetable routes for the summer and brought fresh vegetables in about every day. We didn't buy our milk at the store; it was delivered to our door by a routeman. Ice was delivered the same way.

We had never heard of "balanced" meals, vitamins or calories, so didn't worry whether we were eating right. Nor had we heard of microbes! I baked my own bread, pies, cakes and cookies from scratch — no fancy box mixes! Sometimes we could buy cookies by bulk. They came in wooden boxes and were very tasteless.

We borrowed a heating stove and a gasoline stove to cook on. We rented two rooms in a house where my brother-in-law and his family lived. We had no gas, electric or water bills, just coal and rent bills. We saved money and by Feb. 1, 1900, we had \$85 in a savings account and a baby daughter, so it was time we started a home of our own.

We found a lot on Norton Ave. and paid \$10 down. My husband drew up the plans for the house. He dug the basement, and with the help of friends, he laid the foundation and started the frame. Most of the work was done on Sundays and an hour or so before dark at night on week days. We were able to move into the house in June, 1901. When it was all finished, my husband gathered up all the bills and took them to a lawyer to borrow the money to pay them.



Mrs. Baty in front of her home

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